

Miss M. J. Rickards.

N I X O N's

CHESHIRE PROPHECY

A T L A R G E.

As Published from the Lady
COWPER'S Correct Copy, in
the Reign of Queen ANNE.

W I T H

Historical and Political Remarks.

A N D

Several INSTANCES wherein it has been
Fulfilled.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

The LIFE of NIXON.

NIXON unfolds the dark Decrees of Fate,
Foretells that George our king shall make us great;
That Gallia's Politicks are all a Trance,
For Brunswic's Arms shall conquer wily France.

Sold by S. GAMIDGE, in Worcester; W. LLOYD,
in Mortimer Cleobury: MR. TAYLOR, in Kid-
derminster; and S. HARWARD, in Tewkesbury.

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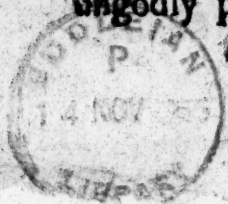


INTRODUCTION.

THIS remarkable Prophecy has been carefully revised, corrected, and improved, also some account given of our author, *Robert Nixon*, who was but a kind of idiot; and employed in following the plough. He lived in some farmers families, and was their drudge and jest. At last *Thomas Chalmers*, esq; of *Vale-royal*, took him into his house, and there he liv'd when he lived uttered this prophecy, which he delivered with as much gravity and solemnity as if he had been an oracle; and it was observed, that though the fool was a driveller, and could not speak common sense when he was un-
spired, yet, in delivering his prophecies, he spoke both plainly and sensibly; how truly will be shewn in the following pages.

As to the credit of this prophecy, I dare say it is as well attested as any of *Nostradamus* or *Merlin*, and has come to pass as well as the best of *Bickerstaff*, the latter the greatest prophet of the last century. Now I would not have any body laugh at it, merely because it is a prophecy. Some ungodly people think there has been no

By from Stevens Cox
(Cat 6/754)



witch since the *witch of Endor*, nor no prophet since *Malachi*; but it is plain enough that great men in all ages had recourse to prophecy as well as the vulgar. Fortune telling is the low kind of prophecy; and yet these minor prophets have many advocates to argue and (if you please to prove the truth of their predictions. Not to give instances out of antient history of the wonders performed by *English, Scots, and Irish* prophets; the most modern story furnishes us with examples of the greatest monarchs who have received comfort by the art of soothsaying. I would not have all grave persons despise the inspirations of *Nixon*. The late *French* king gave audience to an inspired farmer, and rewarded him with an hundred pounds for his prophetic intelligence; though, by what I can learn, he did not come near our *Nixon* for gifts.

The *Cheshire* prophecy has so many oddities in it, that I am sure the reader will be glad to see a thing which is as well known in that County Palatine, as *mother Skipton's* in *Yorkshire*. The simplicity, the circumstances, and the history of it are so remarkable, that I could not help communicating it to the public, who, I hope, will be as much delighted with it as myself.

By the way, this is not a prophecy of to day; it is as old as the powder-plot; and the story will make it appear, that there is as little imposture in it as the *Jacobites* pretend there is in the person it seems to have an eye to; but whether they are both alike impostures or not, I leave to the reader to determine.





NIXON's Prophecy.

*A raven builds in the stone lion's mouth,
An eagle sits on the bow-window south,
The three thumb'd boy does three kings horses
hold,
The stone cross sinks, as Nixon had foretold.*

IN the reign of King *James I.* there lived a too *C* whose name was *Nixon*. One day he came in from the plough, out of the field, and laying down the things he had in his hands, remained for a little while in the dumps, and then, with a hoarse voice, said, Now I will *Prophecy*. — Then he spoke as follows.

When a raven shall build in a stone lion's mouth, on the top of a church in *Cheshire*, then a king of *England* shall be driven out of his kingdom, and never return more.

When an eagle shall sit on the top of the house, then an heir shall be born to the *Gbolmondley's* family; and his heir shall live to see *England* invaded with foreigners, who shall proceed so far as a town in *Cheshire*; but a miller, named *Peter*, shall be
A 3 born

born with two heels on one foot, and at that time living in a mill of Mr. *Cholmondley's*, who shall be instrumental in delivering the nation. The person who then governs the nation shall be in trouble, and skulk about; the invading king shall be laid across a horse's back like a calf, and led in triumph. The miller having been instrumental to it shall bring forth the person that governs the kingdom, and be knighted for what he has done; and after that *England* shall see happy days. A young new set of men of virtuous manners shall come, who shall prosper and make a flourishing church for two hundred years.

As a token of the truth of all this, a wall of Mr. *Cholmondley's* shall fall: if it fall downwards, the church shall be oppressed and rise no more; but if upwards, next the rising hill on the side of it, then it will again flourish. Under this wall shall be found the bones of a *British* king.

A pond shall ran with blood three days, and the cross stone pillar in the forest sink so low in the ground, that a crow from the top of it shall drink of the best blood in *England*.

A boy shall be born with three thumbs, and shall hold three kings horses, while *England* shall three times be won and lost in one day.

The original may be seen in several families in that county, and is, particularly, in the hands of Mr. *Egerton*, of *Olton*, with many other remarkables. As, that *Peckforton* windmill should be removed to *Ludditon Hall*: and that *Olton* mill should be driven with blood instead of water.

Now for authorities to prove this prophecy to be genuine, and how far it has been hitherto accomplished, I might refer myself to the whole county of *Cheshire*, where it is in every body's mouth, and has been so these forty years. As much as I have of the manuscript was sent me by a person of sense and veracity, as little given to visions as any body. For mine own part, I build nothing upon this or any other prophecy, only there is something so very odd in the story, and so pat in the wording of it, that I cannot help giving it as I found it.

The family of the *Cholmondleys* is very antient in this county, and takes its name from a place so called, near *Namptwich*; there are also *Cholmston* and *Cholmodeston*; but the seat of that branch of the family which kept our prophet *Nixon*, is at *Vale-royal*, on the river *Wever*, in *De la Mere Forest*. It was formerly an abbey, founded by *Edward I.* and came to the *Cholmond-*

leys from the famous family of the *Helcrofs*. When *Nixon* prophesied this family was near being extinct, the heir having married the daughter of Sir *Walter St. John*, a lady not esteemed very young; who, notwithstanding, being with child, fell in labour, and continued so for three days; during which time an eagle sat upon the house top, and fled away when she was delivered, which happened to be of a son.

A raven is also known to have built in a stone lion's mouth, in the steeple of the church of *Over*, in the forest of *De la Mere*.

Not long before the abdication of King *James*, the wall spoken of fell down, and fell upwards! and, in removing the rubbish, the bones of a man of a more than ordinary size were found. A pond, at the same time, ran with water that had a reddish tincture, and was never known to have done so before or since.

Headless Cross, in the forest, which, in the memory of man, was several feet high, is now sunk within half a foot of the ground.

In the parish of *Budworth*, a boy was born with three thumbs, about eighteen years ago; the youth is still living there: and the miller *Peter* lives in *Nogginshire-mills*, in expectation of fulfilling this pro-

phesy in the person of *Perkin*. He has also two heels upon one foot, but I find he intends to use them in the service of King *George*; is zealous for the Protestant Succession in the house of *Hanover*; has a vote for the knights of the shire, and gives it on the right side; in a word. *Peter* will prate and box for the good cause *Nixon* lifted him in: which Lady *Egerton* perceiving, and wishing well to another revolution, she very often desired her husband to turn him out of the mill; but he looked upon it as whimsical, and *Peter* continues there in hopes of being a knight.

Of this *Peter* (I have been told) the Lady *Narcliff*, of *Cheisea*, and the Lady *St. John*, of *Baltersea*, have often been heard to talk; and that they both asserted the truth of this prophecy, and its accomplishment, with particulars more extraordinary than any I have mentioned.

The noise of *Nixon's* predictions reaching the king's ears, he would needs see this fool; who cried, and made ado, that he might not go to court: and the reason he gave was. that he should be starved. A very whimsical fancy of his! courts not being places where people are used to be starved in, if once they come there, whatever they were before. The king being

informed of *Nixon's* refusing to come, said he would take particular care that he should not be starved, and ordered him to be brought up. *Nixon* cried out he was sent for again; and soon after the messenger arrived, who brought him up from *Chefbire*. How, or whether he prophesied to his majesty, nobody can tell, but he is not the first fool that has made a good court prophet. That *Nixon* might be well provided for, it was ordered that he should be kept in the kitchen, but he grew so troublesome in licking and picking the meat, that the cooks locked him up in a hole, & the king going on a sudden from *Hampton Court* to *London* they forgot *Nixon* in the hurry, and he was really starved to death.

There are many passages of this fool-prophet's life and sayings transmitted by tradition, from fathers in this county: As, that when he lived with a farmer, before he was taken into Mr. *Cholmondley's* family, he goared an ox so terribly that one of the ploughmen threatened to beat him for abusing his master's beast. *Nixon* said, my master's beast will not be his three days. A life in an estate dropping in that time, the lord of the manor took the same ox as an heriot. This account as whimsical and romantic as it is, was told to lady *Cowper*, in the year 1670, by Dr. *Patrick* late bishop

of *Ely*, then chaplain to Sir *Walter St. John*: and that lady had the following particulars relating to this prophecy, and the fulfilling many parts of it, from Mrs. *Chute*. sister to Mrs. *Cholmondley*: who affirmed, That multitudes of people gathering together to see the raven before mentioned, the bird was affrighted from her young; that she herself was one; and the cry among the people was, *Nixon's* prophecy is come to pass, we shall have a foreign king. She declared, that she read over the prophecy many times when her sister was with child of the heir who now enjoys the estate. She particularly remembered that King *James II.* was there plainly pointed at, and that it was foretold he should endeavour to subvert the laws and religion of this country; for which reason they should rise and turn him out. That the eagle which *Nixon* prophesied, perched in one of the windows all the time her sister was in labour. She said, it was the biggest bird she ever saw; that it was in a deep snow; that it perched on the edge of a bow-window which had a large border on the outside; that she and many others opened the window to scare it away, but it would not move till Mrs. *Cholmondly* was delivered, after which it took flight to a

great tree over against the room her sister lay in, where having staid three days it flew away in the night. She affirmed further unto the Lady *Cowper*, that the falling of the garden wall was a thing not to be questioned, it being in so many people's memory. That it was foretold the heir of *Vale-royal* should live to see *England* invaded by foreigners, and should fight bravely for his king and country. That the miller is alive, expecting knighthood, and is in the very mill. That it is foretold, he should kill two invaders who would come in, one from the West, the other from the North. That he from the North shall bring with him all nations, *Sweedes*, *Danes*, *German*, and *Dutch*; and in the folds of his garment he'd bring fire, famine, plague, and murder. That many great battles should be fought in *England*; and one on *London Bridge*, which should be so bloody that people should ride up to their horses bellies in blood. That several battles should be fought in the county of *Cheeshire*; and the last in *England* would be on *De la Mere Forest*. That the heir of *Olton*, whose name is *E—n*, and has married Earl *Cholmondley's* sister, should be hanged at his own gate. Lastly, he foretells great glory and prosperity to those who stand in defence of their laws and liberties, and misery to those

who betray them. He says the year before this would happen bread corn would be very dear, and the year after more troubles should begin, which would last three years. That the first year would be moderate, the second very bloody, and the third intolerable: and there are no mischiefs but poor *England* should feel at that time: but that *George* the son of *George*, should put an end to all. That afterwards the church should flourish, and *England* be the most glorious nation on the earth. The same lady *Cowper* was not content to take these particulars from Mrs. *Chute*, but enquired the truth of them of Sir *Thomas Ashton*, and he attested it was in great reputation in *Chester*, and that the facts were well known by every one to have happened as *Nixon* said they would; adding, that the morning before the garden wall fell, his neighbour, Mr. *Cholmondley*, going a hunting, said, *Nixon* seldom fails, but now I think he will, for he foretold, that this day my garden wall should fall, and I think it looks as if it would stand these forty years. That he had not been gone a quarter of an hour before the wall split, and fell upwards against the rising of a hill, which as *Nixon* foretold was the presage of a flourishing church.

As to removing *Peckforton Mill*, it was done by Sir *John Carew*, the mill having

lost its custom : for which he ordered it to be set on *Ludgate Hill* : when being asked, if he did it to fulfil the prophecy, he vowed he never thought of it. I myself have enquired of a person who knows Mr. *Cholmondley's* pond as well as *Rosamond's* in *St. James's Park*, who assured me, the falling of the wall, and the pond running blood, as they call it, are facts, which, in *Cheshire*, any one would be reckoned mad for but doubting.

As there are several particulars in this prophecy unfulfilled, so when they come to pass, some other circumstances may be added that are not convenient to be told till accomplished.





The LIFE of NIXON, The Cheshire PROPHEET.

In a LETTER from NAMPTWICH.

S I R,

I Have read over your *Cheshire* Prophecy, and must needs say, that what you have added is to be found in the original, written in doggrel verse. I have read it over & over, and tho' it is longer than your prophecy, yet I think the substance of it is there; and I shall now give you some material passages, which will serve to make your prophecy compleat. To these I shall add a short account of his life, as I have been able to inform myself of it by old people. I could meet with but one man who remembered the prophet, and that was old *Woodman*, of *Copnal*.

He says, that Nixon was a short squab fellow; had a great head and goggle eyes; that he used to drivel when he spoke, which was very seldom; & was extremely furly. He particularly had a spight against children, and would run after them to beat them when they came in his way, especially

if they made sport with him, at he said they used to do. He was at first a plough-boy to farmer *Crowton* of *Swanlow*, and so stubborn that they could make him do nothing without beating. They could seldom get any thing out of him but *yes* and *no*. And if he spoke much more it was unintelligible: nay he would hardly say *yes* or *no*, unless he was pinched by hunger. He had a very good stomach, and the report was he could eat up a shouldor of mutton at one meal, if they would let him, and a good hunch of bread and cheese after it. The people had it seems a strange reverence even for stupidity, and they took his silence like that of an oracle, as portentous as he prophesied.

The first time he was found out to be a prophet was upon this occasion: Farmer *Crowton* being one day at work in the field near the river *Wever* in *Swanlow* parish, & his boy *Nixon* followed him; the boy stopped on a sudden, dropped his bottle & his budget, and stood motionless, with his eyes fixed towards heaven. Neither words could get him ot of his trance for the space of an hour. When he recovered, he took up the things he had dropped & followed the plough. His master and the men who were at work in the same field stood by all the while, and thought he was in a fit, but

but wondered he did not fall. He seemed quite insensible of any alteration that had happened to him. But for about a quarter of an hour after he talked very reasonably about several things which had been done some time before, and dropped expressions of others that were to be done, which presently made his master and those about him conclude there was something sacred in Nixon's dulness, and that his words were oracles, especially when some things he foretold fell out according to his prediction. It was with this farmer he liv'd when he prophesied of his master's ox, as it is mentioned in this prophecy.

I must correct some errors you have been led into by the imperfect copies of this prophecy. As that about the falling of the wall, whereas, in truth, it has a little literal reference to the state only. *Woodman* said, that when the wall belonging to *Vale royal* house fell down, it was to denote some remarkable change in the government. That if it was a serene day, and the wall fell inwards, it signified an advantageous and happy change; but if it were a stormy day, and fell into the brook, it signified the direct contrary. To this he added, that the *Cholmond'ey* family, whose seat it was, kept several workmen in yearly pay to support the wall, and every month to inspect it

it all round. That was buttressed both within and without ; and the week before it fell down, the workmen gave in their report that it was so strong it might reasonably stand a hundred years without repairs.

This, I assure you, is not only what the old man told me, but what I have heard from several others, and can get well attested if it is thought proper ; as also the particulars of the falling of the wall ; which are these :

Upon the 4th of *August*, 1688, about eleven in the forenoon being a very calm and clear day, that wall fell inwards all at once, and not so much as a single stone fell outwards.

This happening so short a time before the Revolution, was taken notice of as an accident which was to our advantage. And as there was a greater rising for the Prince of *Orange* in *Cheshire* than in any one county in *England*, why may we not imagine, that *Nixon's* prophecy did contribute very much to it ?—The objection to this may be, That the owner of the said house, *Thomas Cholmondley*, esq; was a *Jacobite*; and it is not likely that any thing about him could bode well to the Revolution. But his being a *Jacobite* gives greater authority to the prediction and the fulfilling

of it. For it is not likely, that one who was such an enemy to the Prince of *Orange*, should let a miracle be wrought in his family in favour of the happy change he soon after accomplished. I should not have made this digression, had not some people almost as stupid at *Nixon*, but by no means so well gifted in prophecy, given out, that the falling of the wall denoted the rising of the Pretender; and this too, just as he was running away from *Scotland*.

I cannot help observing to you upon this occasion, that some in this country were strangely spirited by this your prophecy. When the rebels advanced to *Preston*, we were told that they intended to march thro' our county into *Flintshire* and *Denbighshire*. If they had, their route must have been through *De la Mere Forest*, where *Nixon* lived and prophesied: and the miller *Peter* with his countrymen, were determined to give them a warm reception. This would have given great credit to your prophecy, which is abused when it has any interpretation applied to it which has an eye to Popery and Slavery. For as great a fool as *Nixon* was, he was not so stupid as many of our modern zealots, nor ever dropped a word against the Protestant Religion.

To return to old *Woodman*. He informed me further, that after it was known what a prophet farmer *Crowton* had in his family, Mr. *Cholmondeley* sent for this fellow, and kept him at his house, giving him in charge to his steward, and ordering him to try if he could make any thing of him, and learn him to read. But *Nixon's* stupidity increased on him the more the steward endeavoured to improve him, and the most he could get out of him was just to make him hold the goad right, and drive the oxen to plough. As he was once in the field with the rest of Mr. *Cholmondeley's* servants, he let fall his goad on a sudden, as he had done his bottle and budget before. He stood motionless after the same manner, with his eyes fixed towards heaven. The servants talked to him and beat him to drive him to work, but all to no purpose. He remained in a sort of a trance for the space of an hour, and then recovering, he took up his goad, and went on his business as if nothing had happened. One of Mr. *Cholmondeley's* men asked him, what ailed him? and why he stood there so long? To whom he replied, that he had seen those things which he could not tell them, and which man never saw before. He then discoursed with the servants, who crowded around him, for near two hours, and spoke

as reasonable as the best of them could have done, without any manner of hesitation.

He foretold the Civil Wars; the Death of King *Charles I.* the Restoration of *Charles II.* the Abdication of *James II.* the Revolution, and glorious War with *France*; & the flourishing state of the kingdom afterwards: adding, these things will as surely happen, as I shall be sent for by the king, and starved to death.— When he finished this speech, he returned to his wonted silence and dulness, and was always dull & mute except in one of his trances, when he spoke clearly, and with an air of assurance that they would be accomplished.

As soon as the servants came home they informed their master of the prodigy, and Mr. *Cholmondley* ordered them to write down as much as they could remember, which they did, & it is preserved like hidden treasure: this being all I ever could procure. Mr. *Egerton*, of *Orton*, who is nearly related to the *Cholmondley* family, lays a great stress on *NIXON's* predictions, and I assure you, they are the most antient families in the county.

You have mentioned *NIXON's* being sent for to court by King *James I.* *Woodman* says it was thus: When he came to court the king gave him in charge to one of his officers, commanding him to keep him in

close confinement, and make strict observations on his behaviour, as he could be assured he was no impostor. This gentleman going in a hurry with King *James* to *Theobalds*, he forgot to take care of him, and serve him with Provisions till his return, whereby he was starved to death. It must be observed, *Nixon* could not speak, unless when he came out of his trance, and he could not pronounce a sensible word, more than *aye* or *no*, except when pronouncing his oracles.

Something happened in respect to *Nixon* on his going to court, like what I see in the pamphlet you sent me, called, *The Drummer of Tedworth*. For as the drummer left off beating when King *Charles's* courtiers came to be upon the watch with him, and would not satisfy their curiosity, so our clown, after he was brought to court, was entirely dumb.

Nixon was very grateful to his master *Cholmondley*. He prophesied the heir to be born to the family threescore and ten years after, shall be endowed with eminent qualifications, & arrive at greater honour than any of his ancestors. That he should distinguish himself by his loyalty and services to the king then reigning. And after the happy settlement that should succeed the struggle, the peace should be lasting, with

a continued series of honour and glory unto the nation.

This child, prophesied NIXON, shall be known by the appearance of an eagle at the time of its birth. A long time before the eagle appeared, the country people used to look out for it; and when the lady of *Vale-royal* lay-in, they would cry, where's the eagle? when will *NIXON's* heir be born? The appearance of the eagle was about twenty-five years ago. The lady who lay-in was aunt to *Henry St. John*, late Lord *Bolingbroke*. When she was in labour she heard great shoutings and acclamations of joy; and, inquiring the reason, was told the eagle was come. Upon which her sister and Mrs. *J. S.* who are both living, went to the window, saw the eagle sitting on the bow, and looked at it above a quarter of an hour. It was seen also by several thousands of people, and is such a confirmation of the truth of *NIXON's* prophecy, that the truth of it is not to be doubted by either gentle or simple.

There is some variation in the prophecy concerning the competitors for the kingdom: the *Dutch, Germans, and Danes* are to conquer those that bring fire, famine, plague, and murder in the folds of their garments: none but *Papists* would bring such ruin among *Protestants*.

As for the miller *Peter*, he was born about the time of the Revolution, and Nixon prophesied he should have two heels one foot, and be knighted. The two heels he hath already, but the spurs are not come to his lot. However the country people have knighted him these many years, and honest *Peter* the miller is Sir *Peter* in every one's mouth.

I must here correct an error of Mr. *Addison*, in his *Freeholder*, who has not read your prophecy with the attention a thing of such importance deserves. For he gives the miller two thumbs, whereas NIXON gives him two heels. A mistake in the text of a prophecy is of very dangerous consequence; and I doubt not, but, in future editions, this error will be corrected, and justice done to honest *Peter* the miller. I am, Sir,



Yours, &c.

W. E.

F I N I S.

